

GENERAL SCHEDULE #23 – Elections Records

This Retention and Disposal Schedule covers records that are used to administer elections. The records that are described on the attached pages are deemed necessary (1) for the continued effective operation of Michigan government, (2) to constitute an adequate and proper recording of its activities, and (3) to protect the legal rights of the government of the State of Michigan and of the people.

This schedule supersedes General Schedule #6—County Clerks: items 6.0701-6.0722, 6.9005-6.9014; General Schedule #8—Municipalities: portions of Section 7—City Clerk; and General Schedule #10—Townships: Elections Department.


We, the undersigned, believe that this schedule meets the administrative, legal, fiscal and archival requirements of the State of Michigan.



Christopher Thomas, Director
Bureau of Elections, Michigan Department of State

8/26/07

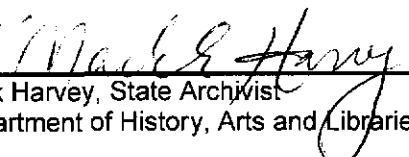
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10/14/07

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GENERAL RETENTION SCHEDULE #23 ELECTIONS RECORDS INTRODUCTION

Public Records

The Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) ([MCL 15.231-15.246](#)) defines public records as recorded information “prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by a public body in the performance of an official function, from the time it is created.”

Retention and Disposal Schedules

Michigan law (MCL [399.5](#) and [750.491](#)) requires that all public records be listed on an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule that identifies the minimum amount of time that records must be kept to satisfy administrative, legal, fiscal and historical needs. Local situations may require retention beyond the periods listed, and nothing prevents an office from retaining records longer than the specified period of time. Schedules also identify when records may be destroyed, and when certain records can be sent to the Archives of Michigan for permanent preservation.

Records cannot be destroyed unless their disposition is authorized by an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule. All schedules are approved by the Records Management Services, the Archives of Michigan and the State Administrative Board. There are two types of schedules that government agencies may use:

- A “general schedule” will cover records that are common to a particular type of government agency, such as elections records. General schedules may not address every single record that a particular office may have in its possession. *General schedules do not mandate that any of the records listed on the schedule be created.* However, if they are created in the normal course of business, the schedule establishes a minimum retention period for them.
- Any record that is not covered by a general schedule must be listed on an “agency-specific schedule” that will address records that are unique to a particular government agency. Agency-specific schedules always supersede general schedules. Agency-specific schedules only address the records of the agency named on the schedule, and may not be used by another agency.

This schedule supersedes General Schedule #6—County Clerks: items 6.0701-6.0722, 6.9005-6.9014; General Schedule #8—Municipalities: portions of Section 7—City Clerk; and General Schedule #10—Townships: Elections Department.

Unofficial Documents

General Schedule #1 addresses the retention of “nonrecord” materials. These documents are broadly defined as drafts, duplicates, convenience copies, publications and other materials that do not document agency activities. These materials can be disposed of when they have served their intended purpose. Government agencies need to identify the “office of record” when multiple offices possess copies of the same record. The “office of record” is responsible for

following the retention period that is specified, duplicates do not need to be retained. A more comprehensive definition of “nonrecords” can be found in the approved schedule (available online at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal_mhc_rms_GS1_local_110758_7.pdf).

Record Maintenance

Records can exist in a wide variety of formats, including paper, maps, photographs, microfilm, digital images, e-mail messages, databases, etc. The retention periods listed on this general schedule do not specify the format that the record may exist in, because each government agency that adopts this schedule may choose to retain its records using different recording media. Government agencies are responsible for ensuring that all of their records (regardless of format) are properly retained and remain accessible during this entire retention period. All records need to be stored in a secure and stable environment that will protect them from tampering, damage and degradation. Electronic records are dependent upon specific hardware and software to be accessed and used. It is important to understand that the original technology that is used to create electronic records will eventually become obsolete. As a result, government agencies should work with their information technology staff to develop preservation plans for retaining electronic records with long-term (more than 10 years) retention requirements. Various laws (including the Records Reproduction Act, [MCL 24.401-24.406](#)) identify acceptable formats for retaining public records; agencies are responsible for understanding and complying with these laws.

Suspending Destruction

Government agencies must immediately cease the destruction of all relevant records (even if destruction is authorized by an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule) if they receive a FOIA request, if they believe that an investigation or litigation is imminent, or if they are notified that an audit, investigation or litigation has commenced. If relevant records exist in electronic formats (such as e-mail, digital images, word processed documents, databases, backup tapes, etc.), the agency may need to notify its information technology staff. Failure to cease the destruction of relevant records could result in penalties.

HAL Can Help!

The State of Michigan Records Management Services is available to assist government agencies with their questions about record retention and acceptable recording media. Agencies may contact the Records Management Services at (517) 335-9132. Additional information is also available from the Records Management Services’ website <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>, including records management manuals, general schedules, e-mail retention guidelines, microfilming standards and digital imaging standards, etc.

General Retention Schedule #23
Elections Records

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
Administration		
100	<u>Bureau of Elections Correspondence</u>	CR+2
	<p>This correspondence is received from the Bureau of Elections and pertains to policy or housekeeping issues. This correspondence may exist in a variety of formats, including memos, letters, notes, and electronic mail messages. This does not include the <u>Election News</u> and the <u>News You Can Use</u> newsletters that are published and retained by the Bureau.</p>	
101	<u>Transitory Correspondence</u>	EVT
	<p>Transitory correspondence is any form of written communication with a short-term interest that has no documentary value. This type of correspondence has limited administrative and evidential value that is lost soon after the communication is received. Transitory messages do not set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, certify a transaction or become a receipt. Examples of transitory correspondence include letters of transmittal that do not add information to the transmitted materials, routine requests for information that require no administrative action, policy decision, special compilation or research. This type of record also includes invitations to work-related events, notifications of an upcoming meeting, and similar records. EVT = need not be retained more than 30 days after receipt.</p>	
102	<u>Post Election Reports</u>	ACT+2
	<p>The Secretary of State is required to submit a post election report to the Elections Assistance Commission detailing the State of Michigan's compliance with the National Voting Rights Act and the Help America Vote Act. Clerks are required to create and maintain data on an ongoing basis that is compiled for this report. ACT = the day after the November general election.</p>	
103	<u>Certification</u>	ACT
	<p>The Bureau of Elections provides training to election officials. Officials take a self-administered accreditation exam, and receive a certificate upon successful completion of the exam. ACT = while serving as an election official.</p>	

**General Retention Schedule #23
Elections Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
County Records (supersedes General Schedule #6—County Clerks: items 6.0701-6.0722, 6.9005-6.9014)		
200	<u>Affidavits of Candidacy</u> These are filed by incumbent judges seeking ballot access for re-election. ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+2
201	<u>Affidavits of Constitutional Qualification (supersedes item #6.0704)</u> These forms are filed by candidates for judicial positions. ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+2
202	<u>Affidavits of Identity (supersedes item #6.0701)</u> These forms are filed by all candidates for elected office, including precinct delegates. ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+2
203A	<u>Applications to Vote</u> These forms are completed and signed by voters at the polls. They are used to confirm that the voter has a valid registration in the jurisdiction, and they are used to verify the identity of the voter. County clerks only maintain these records for select elections. MCL 168.811 ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+2
203B	<u>Applications to Vote—Gubernatorial Elections</u> These forms are completed and signed by voters at the polls during elections that include a gubernatorial race. They are used to confirm that the voter has a valid registration in the jurisdiction, and they are used to verify the identity of the voter. They may be needed if the jurisdiction needs to identify the number of signatures that are needed to support a recall petition. ACT = until the next gubernatorial election is held.	ACT
204	<u>Apportionment (supersedes item #6.0705)</u> These records document the re-apportionment of the Board of Commissioner district boundaries after a census is completed. These files may include correspondence, litigation materials, minutes of apportionment commission meetings, maps, district descriptions, demographic information, etc. ACT = from the first election that the plan was in effect.	ACT+11

General Retention Schedule #23
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Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
205	<u>Ballots (Select School District Elections)</u>	ACT
	<p>These records document votes in select school district elections and special elections that are administered by the county clerk per an agreement. They include ballots, counted absentee ballots, provisional ballots, challenged ballots, unused ballots, spoiled ballots, and ballots rejected for exposure, ballot containers containing optical scan ballots, etc. ACT = until 30 days after the canvass of the election is completed, until a recount is completed, until a court order or a Secretary of State order to suspend destruction is lifted, or until an investigation into defective ballots or voting equipment is completed.</p>	
206	<u>Board of County Canvassers Meeting Materials (supersedes item #6.0706)</u>	PERM
	<p>These files include agendas, minutes, and supporting documentation (such as transcripts, correspondence, certificates of election, challenges) that were reviewed by the board during its meetings.</p>	
207A	<u>Campaign Finance Statements of Organization—Committees Receiving Less Than \$50,000 (supersedes item #6.0707A)</u>	ACT+5
	<p>These records document the creation of committees supporting the election/re-election of candidates for local offices (or groups supporting/opposing local ballot questions) whose campaign committee received less than \$50,000 in the election cycle. ACT = until the official date of dissolution.</p>	
207B	<u>Campaign Finance Statements of Organization—Committees Receiving More Than \$50,000 (supersedes item #6.0707A)</u>	ACT+15
	<p>These records document the creation of committees supporting the election/re-election of candidates for local offices (or groups supporting/opposing local ballot questions) whose campaign committee received more than \$50,000 in the election cycle. ACT = until the official date of dissolution.</p>	
208A	<u>Campaign Finance Reporting--Committees Receiving Less Than \$50,000 (supersedes item #6.0707B)</u>	CR+5
	<p>These records document the campaign finance activities of candidates for local offices (or groups supporting/opposing local ballot questions) whose campaign committee received less than \$50,000 in the election cycle. They may include campaign finance reports (regular reports during the</p>	

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Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
	election cycle and annual reports, as required), amendments, receipts for late filing fee charges, correspondence, other statements and reports.	
208B	<u>Campaign Finance Reporting--Committees Receiving More Than \$50,000</u> CR+15 (supersedes item #6.0707B)	
	These records document the campaign finance activities of candidates for local offices (or groups supporting/opposing local ballot questions) whose campaign committee received more than \$50,000 in the election cycle. They may include campaign finance reports (regular reports during the election cycle and annual reports, as required), amendments, receipts for late filing fee charges, correspondence, other statements and reports.	
209	<u>Candidate Filing Fee Refunds</u> (supersedes item #6.0708)	ACT
	After the primary is held some candidates are eligible for a refund of their filing fee. ACT = until audit.	
210	<u>Candidate Listing</u> (supersedes item #6.0702)	ACT+2
	This register is used to log when a candidate files an Affidavit of Identity (see item #202). ACT = until the election is held.	
211	<u>Certificates of Acceptance</u> (supersedes item #6.0709)	ACT
	After a person is elected to a school board they have to file a certificate of acceptance with the school district. A copy is sent to the county clerk (MCL 168.309). ACT = until the term of office expires.	
212	<u>County Election Commission Meeting Materials</u> (supersedes item #6.0711)	PERM
	These files include agendas, minutes, resolutions and supporting documentation that was reviewed by the commission during its meetings.	
213	<u>County Election Results</u> (supersedes item #6.0710)	PERM
	These records (also known as the "canvass of votes") document the final outcome of elections, as determined by the Board of County Canvassers.	
214	<u>Declaration of Intent</u>	ACT+2
	These forms are submitted by individuals who seek nomination or election to an office with write-in votes. Votes for write-in candidates who do not	

PERM = Permanent
EVT = Event

ACT = Active
CR = Creation Date

SUP = Superseded

EXP = Expiration
FY = Fiscal Year

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Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
	file a Declaration of Intent will not be counted. ACT = until the election is held.	
215	<u>Election Challengers</u> An organization or group that intends to appoint election challengers must submit a notarized statement to the clerk of the jurisdiction that states the reason why the right to make the appointments is claimed. These records will include the statement, a copy of the identification card to be used by the challengers, and the approval or denial (and possibly appeal documents). ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+2
216	<u>Election Inspector Certificates (supersedes item #6.0717)</u> Election inspectors must attend training every two years. These certificates document who attended training.	CR+2
217	<u>Election Inspector Training</u> These records include materials developed by the Bureau of Elections and the county clerk to train election inspectors.	SUP
218	<u>Election Notices (supersedes item #6.0703)</u> Clerks must publish a notice in local newspapers notifying the public of the close of registration to vote, of upcoming elections and of public accuracy tests of voting equipment. These records will include a copy of the notice, the affidavit of publication and the bill from the newspaper. ACT = until canvass of the election is completed.	ACT+2
219	<u>Electronic Voting Systems</u> These systems are used to conduct select school district elections and special elections that are administered by the county clerk per an agreement. They include voting devices, ballot containers, optical scan ballots, etc. ACT = until 30 days following final determination of the Board of Canvassers (R168.790(18)). In addition, these records may need to be retained until a recount is completed, or until a court order to suspend destruction is lifted.	ACT
220	<u>Nominating and Qualifying Petitions (supersedes item #6.0715)</u> All candidates (both partisan and non-partisan) for countywide offices must file nominating or qualifying petitions with the clerk. These	ACT

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Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
	<p>petitions contain signatures of registered voters living within the office's jurisdiction stating that they want to have the candidate's name placed on the ballot. These records may be returned to the candidate or destroyed as requested by candidate at the end of their retention period. ACT = until January 1 following the election.</p>	
221	<u>Nominating Petition Record</u>	ACT+2
	<p>This record lists which candidates submitted nominating petitions for each election cycle. It contains the office, candidate, filing date, determination date, number of signatures required and filed, date the petitions were returned or destroyed, and the date of the election. ACT = until the petitions (see item #222) are disposed of.</p>	
222	<u>Oaths of Office—Election Officials</u>	ACT+2
	<p>This affidavit is signed by election officials who serve on Absent Voter Counting Boards, as Election Inspectors, etc. who affirm that they will lawfully fulfill the duties to which they have been appointed. Poll watchers who observe the action of the absent voter counting board must also take and sign an oath of secrecy. ACT = until canvass of the election is completed.</p>	
223	<u>Poll Books (supersedes item #6.0716)</u>	ACT+2
	<p>These books identify which registered voters participated in an election. They identify which voters were issued provisional ballots and which voters were challenged. This record includes Absent Voter Poll Books that identify which absent voters were mailed ballots. These books are received from cities and townships for maintenance by the county clerk. MCL 168.811 ACT = until canvass of the election is completed.</p>	
224	<u>Precinct Delegates</u>	ACT+2
	<p>These records document the certification of election results for precinct delegates and notification to political parties. They may include tally sheets, certificates of election, lists, etc. ACT = until the election is held.</p>	
225	<u>Precinct Tabulation Data (supersedes item #6.0719)</u>	ACT+2
	<p>This data documents the programming (burning) of removable data storage devices for precinct tabulators. It will include definitions, vote totals, an audit of voting activity. The data may be transferred to other storage media for retention. ACT = until the election is held.</p>	

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Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
226A	<u>Preliminary Accuracy Testing (Federal Offices)</u>	ACT+2
	<p>These records document tests of voting equipment prior to the election. They include data containing voting formulas for the election that is used to test the equipment's accuracy, AutoMARK testing, test ballots, test decks, documents and certification, edit listings, etc. ACT = until the election is held.</p>	
226B	<u>Preliminary Accuracy Testing (State and Local Offices)</u>	ACT+30 days
	<p>These records document tests of voting equipment prior to the election. They include data containing voting formulas for the election that is used to test the equipment's accuracy, AutoMARK testing, test ballots, test decks, documents and certification, edit listings, etc. ACT = until the election is held.</p>	
227A	<u>Proof Ballots (State and Local Offices) (supersedes item #6.0720)</u>	ACT+30 days
	<p>Proof ballots are produced to proofread the wording and formatting of each style of ballot that will be used in the election. They are reviewed by the candidates, Bureau of Elections and the County Election Commission prior to printing. These records may include hard copy or electronic proof ballots (one of each style) and related correspondence. ACT = until the election is held.</p>	
227B	<u>Proof Ballots (Federal Offices) (supersedes item #6.0720)</u>	ACT+22 months
	<p>Proof ballots are produced to proofread the wording and formatting of each style of ballot that will be used in the election. They are reviewed by the candidates, Bureau of Elections and the County Election Commission prior to printing. These records may include hard copy or electronic proof ballots (one of each style) and related correspondence. ACT = until the election is held.</p>	
228	<u>Proposal Petitions</u>	ACT+2
	<p>Groups or individuals wishing to place a question on the countywide ballot for an upcoming election must also submit petitions. These petitions contain signatures of registered voters living within the jurisdiction stating that they want to have the proposal placed on the ballot. ACT = until canvass of the election is completed.</p>	

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Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
229	<u>Recalls</u>	CR+2
	Voters may initiate a recall of elective officers in the state. These records will contain petition language submissions, clarity review documents, public meeting notices, signed petitions, signature challenges, petition review notices, correspondence, etc.	
230	<u>Recounts (supersedes item #6.0714)</u>	ACT+2
	These records document the administration of election recounts. They may include tally sheets, application forms, financial documents, petitions, counter petitions, objections, sign-in sheets, correspondence, and personnel records for the workers, etc. ACT = until the recount is completed.	
231A	<u>Sample Ballots (State and Local Offices)</u>	ACT+30 days
	These ballots are produced and marked “sample” for posting for public information. ACT = until the election is held.	
231B	<u>Sample Ballots (Federal Offices)</u>	ACT+22 months
	These ballots are produced and marked “sample” for posting for public information. ACT = until the election is held.	
232	<u>School Election Coordinating Committee</u>	EXP+6
	The school election coordinating committee identifies the duties and responsibilities of parties that administer school elections. Their agreements are renewed every two years. These records may include meeting records, agreements, maps, resolutions, correspondence, etc.	
233	<u>Statement of Vote (supersedes item #6.0721)</u>	ACT+2
	These documents are certified on Election Day by election inspectors. They summarize the votes for write-in candidates and the number of ballots issued (used and unused). The statement may be part of the poll book. MCL 168.811 ACT = until the election is held.	
234	<u>Tally Sheets/Books (supersedes item #6.0722)</u>	ACT+2
	These documents are used to calculate the number of write-in votes. These sheets may be part of the poll book. MCL 168.811 ACT = until the election is held.	

General Retention Schedule #23
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Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
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235	<u>Tie Votes</u>	ACT+2
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These records document that proper procedures were followed when breaking a tie vote. These records include notices, sign-in sheets, and the name slips, etc. ACT = until the tie vote is broken.

236	<u>Voting Equipment Acquisition</u>	ACT+6
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These records document the acquisition and maintenance of voting equipment. They include contracts, HAVA grants, maintenance agreements, serial numbers, resolutions, correspondence, etc. ACT = life of equipment.

**General Retention Schedule #23
Elections Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
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City, Township and Village Records (supersedes General Schedule #8—Municipalities: portions of Section 7—City Clerk, and General Schedule #10—Townships: Elections Department)

300 Absentee Ballot Envelopes ACT+2

These envelopes were used to transmit absentee ballots. Envelopes containing valid ballots will be opened and emptied so the ballot can be counted (see items #304-305). Invalid/rejected ballots remain inside the envelope, and the envelope may remain sealed. In this case, the ballot is not counted. MCL 168.811 ACT = until the election is held.

301 Absentee Voter List ACT+2

This list identifies which voters in each precinct were mailed absentee ballots. It contains the name of the voter, address where the ballot was mailed, date the application was received, date the ballot was mailed, date the ballot was received, etc. This record includes the absentee ballots information posting. The list may be part of the poll book. MCL 168.811 ACT = until the election is held.

302 Application for Absentee Ballot ACT+2

These applications are submitted by voters wishing to receive an absentee ballot for upcoming primary and/or general elections. These records also include “emergency” absentee ballot requests. MCL 168.811 ACT = until the election is held.

303A Applications to Vote ACT+2

These forms are completed and signed by voters at the polls. They are used to confirm that the voter has a valid registration in the jurisdiction, and they are used to verify the identity of the voter. MCL 168.811 ACT = until the election is held.

303B Applications to Vote—Gubernatorial Elections ACT

These forms are completed and signed by voters at the polls during elections that include a gubernatorial race. They are used to confirm that the voter has a valid registration in the jurisdiction, and they are used to verify the identity of the voter. They will be used if the jurisdiction needs to identify the number of signatures that are needed to support a recall petition. ACT = until the next gubernatorial election is held.

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Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
304	<u>Affidavits of Identity</u>	ACT+2
	These forms are filed by all candidates for elected office, including precinct delegates. ACT = until the election is held.	
305	<u>Affidavit of Voter Unable to Meet Photo ID Requirements</u>	ACT+2
	This form is signed by voters who do not possess photo identification when attending the polls. ACT = until the election is held.	
306	<u>Ballots (Federal Offices)</u>	ACT+22 months
	These records document votes in elections where the office of U.S. President, U.S. Senate, or Representative in Congress appears on the ballot (including proof ballots, sample ballots, uncounted ballots, counted absentee ballots, provisional ballots, challenged ballots, spoiled ballots, and ballots rejected for exposure). They include optical scan ballots and the programs used to tabulate them, and Federal Write-In Absentee Ballots. Optical scan ballots shall be stored in sealed ballot bags in a secure place during this retention period, after the retention requirements specified under Michigan law have been met (see item #305 and 311). ACT = until canvass of the election is completed.	
307	<u>Ballots (State and Local Offices)</u>	ACT
	These records document votes in elections for state and local offices, some school district elections, and special elections in which candidates for federal offices did not appear on the ballot (including proof ballots, sample ballots, uncounted ballots, unused ballots, counted absentee ballots, provisional ballots, challenged ballots, spoiled ballots, and ballots rejected for exposure). They include voting devices/tabulators, ballot containers containing optical scan ballots, programs, edit listings, etc. Note: this series also applies to unused ballots for federal, state and local offices. ACT = until 30 days after the canvass of the election is completed, until a recount is completed, until a court order or a Secretary of State order to suspend destruction is lifted, or until an investigation into defective ballots or voting equipment is completed.	
308	<u>Candidate Listing</u>	ACT+2
	This register is used to log when a candidate files an Affidavit of Identity. ACT = until the election is held.	

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Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
309	<u>Declaration of Intent</u> These forms are submitted by individuals who seek nomination or election to an office with write-in votes. Votes for write-in candidates who do not file a Declaration of Intent will not be counted. ACT = until January 1 following the election.	ACT
310	<u>Election Notices</u> Clerks must publish a notice in local newspapers notifying the public of the close of registration to vote, of upcoming elections and of public accuracy tests of voting equipment. These records will include a copy of the notice, the affidavit of publication and the bill from the newspaper. ACT = until canvass of the election is completed.	ACT+2
311	<u>Election Inspector Applications</u> These applications are submitted by people who are interested in serving as election inspectors. Inspectors are appointed by the local election commission. ACT = while the person is eligible for appointment as an inspector.	ACT
312	<u>Election Inspector Certificates</u> Election inspectors must attend training every two years. These certificates document who attended training.	CR+2
313	<u>Election Inspector Training</u> These records may include materials developed by the Bureau of Elections, the county clerk and the local clerk to train election inspectors.	SUP
314	<u>Electronic Voting Systems</u> These records document elections for state and local offices, some school district elections, and special elections. They include voting devices, ballot containers, optical scan ballots, programs, edit lists, etc. ACT = until canvass of the election is completed, until a recount is completed, until a court order or a Secretary of State order to suspend destruction is lifted, or until an investigation into defective ballots or voting equipment is completed. Note: if the electronic voting equipment is needed for an upcoming election, the original seal of record may be broken to permit the transfer of these records to sealed ballot bags for the remainder of their retention period.	ACT+30 days

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Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
315	<u>Federal Post Card Application</u> These voter registration/absent voter ballot applications are produced and distributed by the federal government to permit eligible individuals to vote while outside of the country.	CR+4
316	<u>Local Election Commission Meeting Materials</u> These files include agendas, minutes, resolutions and supporting documentation that was reviewed by the commission during its meetings.	PERM
317	<u>Local Election Results</u> These records (also known as the “canvass of votes”) document the final outcome of elections, as determined by the Board of County Canvassers.	PERM
318	<u>Nominating and Qualifying Petitions</u> All candidates (both partisan and non-partisan) for local offices must file nominating or qualifying petitions with the clerk. These petitions contain signatures of registered voters living within the office’s jurisdiction stating that they want to have the candidate’s name placed on the ballot. These records may be returned to the candidate or destroyed as requested by candidate at the end of their retention period. ACT = until January 1 following the election.	ACT
319	<u>Nominating Petition Record</u> This record lists which candidates submitted nominating petitions for each election cycle. It contains the office, candidate, filing date, determination date, number of signatures required and filed, date the petitions were returned or destroyed, and the date of the election. ACT = until the petitions (see item #317) are disposed of.	ACT+2
320	<u>Oaths of Office—Election Officials</u> This affidavit is signed by election officials who serve on Absent Voter Counting Boards, as election inspectors, etc. who affirm that they will lawfully fulfill the duties to which they have been appointed. Poll watchers who observe the action of the absent voter counting board must also take and sign an oath of secrecy. These oaths may be part of the poll book. ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+2

PERM = Permanent
EVT = Event

ACT = Active
CR = Creation Date

SUP = Superseded

EXP = Expiration
FY = Fiscal Year

General Retention Schedule #23
Elections Records

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
321	<u>Precinct Maps</u> These maps define the boundaries of precincts within a jurisdiction. Superseded maps should be sent to the Archives of Michigan for permanent preservation.	SUP Transfer to Archives of Michigan
322A	<u>Preliminary Accuracy Testing (Federal Offices)</u> These records document tests of voting equipment prior to the election. They include data containing voting formulas for the election that is used to test the equipment's accuracy, AutoMARK testing, test ballots, test decks, documents and certification, edit listings, etc. ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+2
322B	<u>Preliminary Accuracy Testing (State and Local Offices)</u> These records document tests of voting equipment prior to the election. They include data containing voting formulas for the election that is used to test the equipment's accuracy, AutoMARK testing, test ballots, test decks, documents and certification, edit listings, etc. ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+30 days
323	<u>Proposal Petitions</u> Groups or individuals wishing to place a question on the local ballot for an upcoming election must also submit petitions. These petitions contain signatures of registered voters living within the jurisdiction stating that they want to have the proposal placed on the ballot. ACT = until canvass of the election is completed.	ACT+2
324	<u>QVF Precinct Lists</u> These lists are generated from the Qualified Voter File to identify who is registered to vote at each precinct within the jurisdiction. MCL 168.811 ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+2
325	<u>School Election Coordinating Committee</u> The school election coordinating committee identifies the duties and responsibilities of parties that administer school elections. Their agreements are renewed every two years. These records may include meeting records, agreements, maps, resolutions, correspondence, etc.	EXP+6

General Retention Schedule #23
Elections Records

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
326	<u>Statement of Vote</u> These documents are certified on Election Day by election inspectors. They summarize the votes for write-in candidates and the number of ballots issued (used and unused). The statement may be part of the poll book. MCL 168.811 ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+2
327	<u>Tally Sheets/Books</u> These documents are used to calculate the number of write-in votes. These sheets may be part of the poll book. MCL 168.811 ACT = until the election is held.	ACT+2
328	<u>Tie Votes</u> These records document that proper procedures were followed when breaking a tie vote. ACT = until the tie vote is broken.	ACT+2
329	<u>Voter Identification Cards—Returned</u> These voter identification cards were returned by the post office as undeliverable. ACT = until the voter's registration is cancelled.	ACT
330	<u>Voter Registration Applications</u> Applications to become a registered voter are received in a variety of ways. The information from the application is entered into QVF and a master card is generated. ACT = until the master card is generated.	ACT
331	<u>Voter Registration Master Cards—Originals</u> These cards identify who is registered to vote in elections. The signatures on the cards are used to verify the identity of the voter. Per MCL 168.514, the registration records, if combustible, shall be destroyed by burning. ACT = until cancelled.	ACT+10
332	<u>Voter Registration Master Cards—Duplicates</u> These cards identify who is registered to vote in elections. Per MCL 168.514, if the original card is reproduced in accordance with the Records Reproduction Act (MCL 24.401-24.406), the original becomes the duplicate record, and the reproduction becomes the original. ACT = until cancelled.	ACT+2

General Retention Schedule #23
Elections Records

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
333	<u>Voter Registration Cards—Voided</u> Clerks will void a voter registration application if the application's deficiency cannot be resolved. A notice of rejection is sent to the applicant. Per MCL 168.514, the registration records, if combustible, shall be destroyed by burning.	CR+2
334	<u>Voter Registration Cards--Change of Address</u> Clerks may receive written notice signed by the voter that he/she has changed addresses. The address change may need to be communicated to a village clerk. These records also include Election Day Change of Address Notices, and Address Confirmation Notices. ACT = until the official voter registration record is updated.	ACT
335	<u>Voting Equipment Acquisition</u> These records document the acquisition and maintenance of voting equipment. They include contracts, HAVA grants, maintenance agreements, serial numbers, resolutions, correspondence, etc. ACT = life of equipment.	ACT+6

**Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries
Records Management Services**

**Frequently Asked Questions
About General Schedules**

Q: What is a public record?

A: The Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) ([MCL 15.231-15.246](#)) defines public records as recorded information “prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by a public body in the performance of an official function, from the time it is created.”

Q: Are all records considered to be “official” records?

A: No. General Schedule #1 addresses the retention of “nonrecord” materials. These documents are broadly defined as drafts, duplicates, convenience copies, publications and other materials that do not document agency activities. These materials can be disposed of when they have served their intended purpose. Government agencies need to identify the “office of record” when multiple offices possess copies of the same record. The “office of record” is responsible for following the retention period that is specified, duplicates do not need to be retained. A more comprehensive definition can be found in the approved schedule (available online at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal_mhc_rms_GS1_local_110758_7.pdf).

Q: Are the retention periods that are listed on general schedules minimum amounts of time that a record should be kept?

A: Yes. General schedules authorize, but do not require, public officials to dispose of records after the expiration of the assigned retention period. Local situations may require retention beyond the periods listed, and nothing prevents a government agency from retaining records longer than the specified period of time. If records are kept for less than the amount of time listed, the agency can be penalized for unlawful destruction of records. In addition, if records are kept too long, they can waste valuable storage space, and they can become a liability to the agency if it receives a FOIA request, or if it becomes involved in litigation.

Q: Does my government agency have to follow a general schedule?

A: Records cannot be lawfully destroyed without the authorization of an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule. The purpose of a general schedule is to ensure that all government agencies are following consistent retention practices, and to prevent individual agencies from having to develop an agency-specific schedule. However, if your government agency does not want to follow an approved general schedule, it would need to get an agency-specific schedule approved. [Note: agency-specific schedules always supersede a general schedule.] Internal policies do not have the force of law that an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule has.

Q: What is an agency-specific schedule?

A: Agency-specific schedules are Retention and Disposal Schedules that only apply to the agency listed on the document. They are intended to cover records that are unique to that specific agency. Records that are listed on an approved general schedule should not be listed on an agency-specific schedule, unless the agency has a unique situation that justifies a different retention period than the one everyone else is following. The instructions and forms for agency-specific schedules are available online at <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>.

Q: What should my government agency do if we create a record that is not listed on the general schedule?

A: The general schedule covers records that are common to most government agencies. However, general schedules do not claim to be inclusive of every record that all agencies create. Records that are not listed on general schedules cannot be destroyed without the authorization of an approved agency-specific schedule.

Q: What should my government agency do if we do not create a record that is listed on the general schedule?

A: Nothing. General schedules do not mandate that any of the records listed on the schedule be created. However, if they are created in the normal course of business, the schedule establishes a retention period for them.

Q: What do the codes in the Total Retention column mean?

A: The **retention codes** that appear on the schedule are used to establish how long records are retained by the creating agency before they are destroyed. Retention

codes determine how destruction dates will be automatically calculated by Versatile (Versatile is the records management software that is used by Records Management Services to manage the retention of records), and the date upon which the calculation will be based. Definitions of these codes can be found in the Records Management Manual that is available online at <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>.

Q: What do the numbers in the Total Retention column represent?

A: In addition to the retention code, a period of time, years and/or months, can be used in the calculation of the retention period. Years are expressed as whole numbers, and months are expressed as fractions. For example, the fraction "0/6" would represent 6 months. The retention code plus the period of time results in a mathematical formula that is used to determine a disposal date.

Q: Do the general schedules only cover paper records, or do they cover databases and other electronic records too?

A: Records can exist in a wide variety of formats, including paper, maps, photographs, digital images, e-mail messages, databases, etc. The retention periods listed on the general schedules do not specify the format that the record may exist in, because each government agency that adopts the schedule may choose to retain its records using different recording media. Government agencies are responsible for ensuring that their records, regardless of format, are properly retained and remain accessible during this entire retention period. Various laws (including the Records Reproduction Act) identify acceptable formats for retaining public records; agencies are responsible for understanding and complying with these laws.

Q: Do the general schedules cover e-mail?

A: Yes. Many of the record series that are listed on the general schedules may originate as e-mail. Those e-mail messages need to be retained for the period of time specified by the schedule. For more information about e-mail retention, please check out the online guide at <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>.

Q: Can records be microfilmed or digitally imaged?

A: Yes. The Records Reproduction Act (MCL 24.401-24.406) regulates the reproduction of public records by Michigan government agencies at all levels. This law requires the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries to promulgate technical

standards to ensure the continued accessibility and usability of records that are microfilmed or digitized throughout their retention period. The standards are also intended to help state and local governments ensure the integrity and authenticity of their records. The Records Management Services administers competitively bid master contracts for microfilming and imaging services. State agencies and local governments are eligible to use these contracts to receive these services. More information is available online at <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>.

Q: How can I determine which records that are listed on the general schedules contain confidential information that should not be released to the public?

A: Select records series that are listed on the general schedules may be exempt from public disclosure, in accordance with the provisions of state and federal laws. Please consult with your attorney if you need additional information.

Q: Is there an appropriate way to destroy records that contain confidential information?

A: Yes. Some public records contain sensitive or confidential information. These records should not be placed in a regular trash or recycle bin when they are destroyed. It is important that government agencies ensure that these records are destroyed in a manner that prevents the inappropriate release of the information. The State of Michigan administers a master contract with a vendor that complies with the state's requirements for confidential destruction of records. Government agencies that are interested in using this contract should contact the vendor: Certified Document Destruction, attention: Brian Dorosz, (800) 433-7876. Confidential electronic records should be destroyed in accordance with the U.S. Department of Defense "Standard Industrial Security Program Operating Manual" (DoD 5220.22-M).

Q: Who is responsible for ensuring that Retention and Disposal Schedules are followed?

A: The Michigan Penal Code (MCL 750.491) establishes misdemeanor penalties for disposing of records without the authorization of an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule. Government agency directors are responsible for ensuring that relevant staff are aware of the provisions in the schedule and follow them. The Records Management Services does not audit agencies and assess penalties. However, courts may penalize agencies for failing to follow an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Q: What should I do if I have suggestions for revising a general schedule?

A: Contact the Records Management Services at (517) 335-9132.

